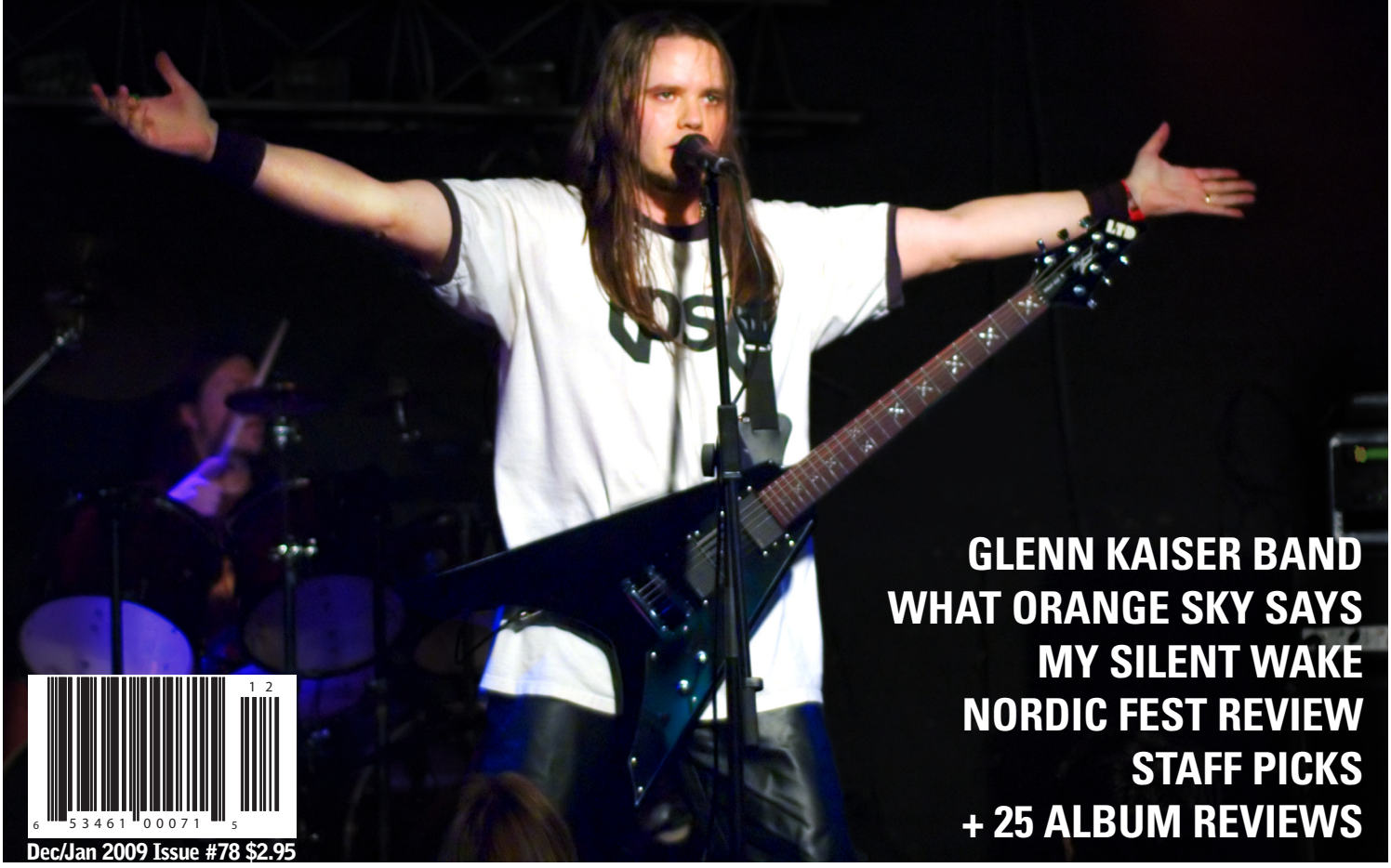
HEAVEN'S METAL

THEOCRACY



GLENN KAISER BAND
WHAT ORANGE SKY SAYS
MY SILENT WAKE
NORDIC FEST REVIEW
STAFF PICKS
+ 25 ALBUM REVIEWS

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Dec/Jan 2009 Issue #78 $2.95

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Lada Krizek and Kreyson played for soldiers in Kosovo

At the invitation of first lieutenant, Fr. Kamil Vícha, chaplain of the 13th contingent of the Army of the Czech Republic who works in a mission focused on protection of public order and safety of inhabitants of the youngest European state of Kosovo, Láda Krížek and Kreyson performed in Kosovo. The group spent three memorable days at the base. We are bringing you a topical reportage right from the military base in Šajkovec:

The concert at the military base had a fantastic atmosphere. I must say that from the first tone everything was absolutely perfect. Sound, lights, the group and the atmosphere under the stage. Láda communicated with the soldiers who were absolutely amazed and it was apparent that they were real soldiers. Their voices sounded as if they were taking an oath – clearly and loudly. Reddy with Láda played several pieces by request. Together with Father Kamil Vícha, he dedicated a piece called "Scházíš mi" (I miss you) to all the soldiers who will never come back home from their missions. It was a really strong emotive experience and had a great applause from everybody.

After that Láda Krížek said, "I think it is wonderful when a person smiles. But things cease to be fun when one's life ends. And I hope that this song will be heard so far that everybody will hear us – and Father Kamil will take care of that because he has received that gift from God – may all those who have not returned home hear us. And not only from here, from the war zones of the countries of former Yugoslavia but also from Afghanistan, Iraq and from all the places where there is even a bigger "draught" than here. And I think that those "above" should be, and actually are happy when we thank them from this place for everything they did for the planet – for well-being with a smile." And then the song "Scházíš mi" followed.

Then there was a turn for big beat again. All the arms were up and the atmosphere at the base was stirring. The concert was slowly approaching its end. The boys finished but the soldiers wanted more and so they called the group back by chanting the words "HEAVY METAL". Zdenál ran to the stage and performed a breathtaking solo. Amazing, quick and perfect. If I say that I could not see the drumsticks at one moment due to the speed with which they were moving, I'm not exaggerating.

After the first bonus song the boys were applauded on the open scene and the audience called them back to the stage for the second time by chanting "KREYSON, KREYSON, KREYSON…". Láda said that due to the distance which these soldiers need to travel to get home, he will be very happy to add more songs. The boys bowed down, said good-bye and were accompanied with big endless chanting and applause as this unforgettable performance approached its end. After the concert the group gave autographs and there was á picture-taking.

—Jan Petrik

Father Kamal Vícha

Atmosphere at the concert

Kreyson at the military base

Kreyson at the military base

Before the concert

Kreyson says goodbye before flying back home

Further information from the concert, including photographs, you can find at the official website of the Ministry of Defense of the Czech Republic - http://www.army.cz/scripts/detail.php?id=12299. ("Kreyson Won Hearts of Soldiers in Kosovo")

Address of the mission: http://www.13kfor.army.cz/

(The main aim of MNTF(C) is to ensure and maintain safe environment primarily in the area of responsibility (AOR). In case of need and based on decisions of the operation commander the MNTF(C) units can fulfill and do fulfill operation tasks in the whole area of Kosovo. KFOR units can be employed also outside Kosovo in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, possibly also in the former Yugoslavian republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Father Kamil Vícha is a long-standing friend of Kreyson and this year he has attended their concerts not only in the Czech Republic but he also went with the group and its fans to a festival in Switzerland where Kreyson experienced a big success. He is also a regular participant in a festival called Noc plná hvezd (Night Full of Stars) in Trinec, where he is along with the Maltese Help of the Czech great priory of the Sovereign Order of Maltese Knights responsible for spiritual services.

SYNNOVE:
The Whore and the Bride

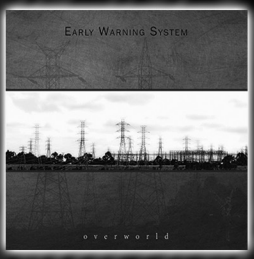
SYNNOVE:
Synnove

MARTYRS SHRINE:
Martyrs Shrine

MORTIFICATION:
Mortification

MORTIFICATION:
Scrolls of the Megilloth

TEMPLAR:
Witch Hunt



EARLY WARNING SYSTEM:
Overworld

LIGHTFORCE:
1986 to 1989

WORLD CLASS OZ METAL

KOHLLAPSE:
Distant Mind Alternative

HORDE:
Hellig Usvart

VARIOUS:
Oz Mosh 2005

FEARSCAPE:
Sleeping in Light

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Issue #78
December/January 2009

HEAVEN'S METAL®

INFECTION CONTROL

As we go to press with this issue of the fanzine – the busy holiday season rapidly approaching – I reflect back on all of the "negativity" that has infected this past year of our lives. I am always amazed, though, at how much – when it's all put in the proper perspective – those of us that live in a free country have to be thankful for. I recall the words of Zero Hour's Jasun Tipton: "Sometimes I think we just need to look at the things we do have and be thankful. I think if people more had that attitude, things would be cool." More importantly for believers, as we look forward to celebrating Christmas and the miraculous birth of Christ, we can be thankful that the "infection within" has been purged; this is a time to rejoice, not lament.

As for metal, 2008 may have started slow, but as you will see with this issue, it finished on the upswing. With huge releases late from Driver, Theocracy, Sympathy, BTA, Once Dead and Harmony (just to name a few) we metalheads have much to be excited about. Once again, be sure to "sound off" about your favorites this past year by checking out the link below to the Heaven's Metal survey. Lord willing, we will be reporting the results in the next issue. Have a wonderful Christmas and a very metal New Year's. We look forward to bringing you more great metal in 2009.

Jonathan "Doc" Swank

P.S. Vote in the readers' poll at hmmag.com/heavensmetal

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Heaven's Metal Editorial Team:
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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads

NORDIC FEST

Seventh Angel, Photo: Chris Law

By JOHANNES JONSSON

Nordicfest is a highlight of the year, with great music, fellowshipping and inspiring Bible studies. The gigs took place in the middle of Oslo in Norway, while the services and the sleeping took place at the world's coolest place – the "metal cave" – outside Oslo.

One of the biggest highlights this year was **Seventh Angel**. The band had not played together for 16 years and has never been to Scandinavia. I finally got the chance to see them live … and they didn't disappoint! The band's heavy sound and **Ian Arkley**'s brutal voice is a perfect mix and their thrashy sound got the crowd headbanging – playing mostly tunes from *Lament For The Weary* as well as one track from *The Torment*. As an extra surprise, they played two brand new tracks and gave good hope for their upcoming album.

The other big highlight was **Tourniquet**. Just as with their classic gig at Bobfest 2005, they gave us a smorgasbord covering their whole career, with classics like "Broken Chromosomes," "Ark of Suffering," "Where Moth and Rust Destroys," etc. As usual, Tourniquet are very professional and very tight. **Ted Kirkpatrick** also did an amazing drum solo. With **Tim Gaines** (**Stryper**) on bass for the gig, they also did a cover of "To Hell With The Devil." Overall, the crowd really got into Tourniquet's music…The band – among other things – said that it's very crucial that we always compare the teachings with the Bible, so we don't get deceived. They also pointed out that the material things are only temporary, but God is eternal; and the only thing that we can take with us from earth is our personal relationship with God.

This year the participating bands came from countries like USA, Norway, Sweden, England, Finland, Germany, Dutch, Belgium and Italy. Dutcher's **Slechtvalk** was a delight to many with their fast and furious music and they really got the crowd headbanging. **Thy Majesty** from Italy delivered their own brand of symphonic metal, but their music never really gripped me. **Dalit** was another band that felt like a sleeping pill with their slow and monotonous sound. A pleasant surprise, however, was the black metal band **Morgenroede** fronted by vocalist **Ronny Hansen** of **Antestor**/**Vaakevandring**. His shrilling voice sounded excellent and so did the music. Another promising band was **Bloodwork** from Belgium with their crunchy death metal. Brittish band **My Silent Wake** is truly a band of quality and they put on a cool live show with their heavy and doom influenced sound. **Benea Reach** is another great live band, although they are too hardcore for me. **Deuteronomium** also did a cool gig playing "Tribal Eagle," "Spell of Hell," the One Bad Pig cover "Red River" as well as several tracks from their latest album. **Arcane Legion** from Germany was one of the more melodic bands this year. Although they had some really tasty guitar solos, the band overall wasn't tight enough for me to really enjoy them. A pleasant surprise this year was **Grave Declaration** – they mix black metal with praise lyrics. Felt great to worship God with atmospheric black metal!

This year we were so many (250 persons) at the festival that there were not enough chairs for all to sit in the chapel in the cave. The teachings were lead by the Pastors **Andreas Larsen** and **Bob Beeman** of Sanctuary International. If you haven't been to Nordic Fest yet I can highly recommend a visit to this cool festival. [nordicfest.no]

News bullets

Barb Scott, wife of **X-Sinner**'s **Rex Scott**, has been diagnosed cancer free after having her cancerous thyroid removed at the beginning of October and completing iodine radiation treatment in early November. They wish to thank all of you who knew and were praying for the situation. Be sure to check out the new X-Sinner CD, recently released, if you have not already.

The Brazilian prog rock/metal band **Deventter** is still working on the pre-production of the new album. The recording of the successor of the debut album *The 7th Dimension* begins the end of the year and will be released in 2009. One of the tracks of the new album, temporary titled "New Song," is already available on the band's Myspace page: myspace.com/deventter. Also, the band now launches a Youtube page with videos that highlight the most special moments of the band in 2008. Among them are: scenes of the opening gig for Dream Theater in Brazil; the show with Circle II Circle; the set at Roça 'N' Roll Festival and also the appearance at Expomusic International Music Fair. [youtube.com/deventter]

In just a matter of weeks now, Bombworks Records will be announcing a week of new releases – one each day. They say they have a lot of amazing stuff cooking, and 2009 is shaping up to be an amazing year for metal! [bombworksrecords.com]

Glass Hammer has just announced its third DVD entitled *Live at the Tivoli,* which features the songs "Eiger Dreams," "The Morning She Woke," "Lirazel," "South Side of the Sky" – along with 150 voices of the Lee University Choir. **Carl Groves** (**Salem Hill**) returns to front the band as do all the regulars. It was filmed at the historic Victorian theater, The Tivoli, in the band's home town of Chattanooga, TN. The DVD, in 5.1 mix, is now shipping from the band's website. Also, the Three Rivers Prog Festival has announced that Glass Hammer will perform on August 9th 2009 at the Pepsi Theater in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. Be sure to check the Glass Hammer website for details. [glasshammer.com]

Retroactive Records is proud to announce the signing of the Italy-based thrash/power metal band **Boarders** for the release of their critically acclaimed album *The World Hates Me*, scheduled for a January 2009 release date. A band that can trace its history back to the late eighties, Boarders presents a unique melding of the aggressive and melodic that draws extensively from the musical trends of the decade in question, delivering a sound certain to garner the interest of those into Megadeth, Metallica, Tourniquet and old school Deliverance. [myspace.com/music4thelion]

Bride is gearing up for their most ambitious CD release ever. In 2009, Bride will produce and release their final work, with thirty songs being considered for this final project. Other than **Dale** and **Troy**, the founders of Bride, no other musicians have been announced. Also in Bride news, December 16th Dale will undergo his second shoulder surgery. This time it is major surgery. After surgery and realistic recovery and healing time Bride will begin the recording process.

HEAVEN'S METAL KAREW
Staff Picks

Top 10 Consensus List
1. Driver – *Sons Of Thunder* (resurrected Rob Rock-infused melodic metal)
2. Theocracy – *Mirror Of Souls* (quintessential power metal)
3. Becoming The Archetype – *Dichotomy* (genre-defining progressive death metal)
4. Sympathy – *Anagogic Tyranny* (crushing technical blackened death metal)
5. Harmony – *Chapter II: Aftermath* (crunchy melodic/prog metal)
6. Once Dead – *Visions of Hell* (thrashy, "all-star" brew of heavy metals)
7. Seventh Power – *Dominion & Power* (Menchen/Sweet power metal)
8. My Silent Wake – *A Garland of Tears* (chilling introspective death/doom metal)
9. Cage – *Hell Destroyer* (ripping conceptual power metal)
10. The Showdown – *Back Breaker* (big, bad, fun and yeah, Southern metal)

Honorable Mentions
Trenches – *The Tide Will Swallow Us Whole* (sludgy ambient/drone metal)
Austrian Death Machine – *Total Brutal* ("Terminator" metal)
Neal Morse – *Lifeline* (soulful pristine prog rock)

Chris Gatto
Once Dead – *Visions of Hell*
Becoming the Archetype – *Dichotomy*
X-Sinner – *Covered in Blood*
Cage – *Hell Destroyer*
Seventh Avenue – *Terium*

Jeff McCormack
Neal Morse – *Lifeline*
Driver – *Sons of Thunder*
Theocracy – *Mirror of Souls*
Fires of Babylon – S/T
Cage – *Hell Destroyer*

Chris Beck
Theocracy – *Mirror of Souls*
Harmony – *Chapter II: Aftermath*
Driver – *Sons of Thunder*
My Silent Wake – *A Garland of Tears*
Once Dead – *Visions of Hell*

Jonathan Swank
Becoming the Archetype – *Dichotomy*
Theocracy – *Mirror of Souls*
Sympathy – *Anagogic Tyranny*
My Silent Wake – *A Garland of Tears*
Harmony – *Chapter II: Aftermath*

Michael Larson
Sympathy – *Anagogic Tyranny*
Synnove – *The Whore and the Bride*
Mirror of Dead Faces – *Lamentation*
Seventh Power – *Dominion and Power*
Alice Cooper – *Along Came A Spider*

Doug Van Pelt
Austrian Death Machine – *Total Brutal*
Driver – *Sons Of Thunder*
Disciple – *Southern Hospitality*
Increave – *Dead End*
Virgin Black – *Requiem Fortissimo*

Loyd Harp
Trenches – *The Tide Will Swallow Us Whole*
Flaskavsae/Light Shall Prevail – split
Seventh Power – *Power and Dominion*
Willow's Whisper – *Pages Turn*
Grave Declaration – *Nightshift Worshipper*

Narnia is currently working hard with their new album and they are very excited about it! According to the band, this will definitely be the biggest step they have taken in terms of songwriting and performance. A release date is not set yet, but it will probably see the light in the middle of 2009. [myspace.com/narniaofficial]

Hero, headed by guitarist/singer **Michael Hero**, has a new album on the way titled called *Immortal*. **Torbjorn Weinesjo** of **Veni Domine** is mixing the album. Musically they describe their sound as an original style of melodic powerful metal with strong melodies and a heavy beat – a mix of soft, beautiful and raw power. [myspace.com/herosweden]

Shadows of Paragon has now completed the recording and they are currently mixing the album. [shadowsofparagon.com]

Pantokrator has recorded a video to the track "Nephilim" from their latest release *Aurum*. Check it out at pantokrator.com.

Christian Liljegren, vocalist and songwriter and label owner of Rivel Records, is back stronger than ever. He left Narnia in early 2008 and has now joined forces again with his brother and bassplayer **Simeon Liljegren** after 12 years. These brothers belong to the one of the hardest working rockers on stage today. **Audiovision** have a great line up besides Christian and Simeon Liljegren, featuring **Olov Andersson** on keyboards, **Michael Rank Jensen** on lead guitars and **Daniel Groth** (from the symphonic and progressive rockers **Grand Stand**) rhythm guitars and vocals from. The final member is **Ralf Bjurbo** on drums. In 2009, Audiovision will the hit the road, doing concerts with all the elements you need for a powerful and explosive rock'n'roll show. [info@rivelrecords.com]

Bombworks Records has signed old school thrashers **Disaffection**. Hailing from Brazil, this 5-piece plays old school thrash / speed metal in the vein of bands like Exodus, Kreator, Ultimatum, Slayer (*Reign in Blood* era), Flotsam and Jetsam, and Austrian Death Machine. The music is chock full of fast and furious riffing, blazing guitar leads, head busting drumming, and in-your-face throwback thrash vocals. The pace never lets up, to the joy of headbangers worldwide, and the music is sure to satisfy any self-respecting speed freak. The band has been playing together since 2005, and they will be releasing their first full length on Bombworks Records in the summer of 2009. Check out the band's myspace at myspace.com/disaffectionthrashers

Bombworks Records has signed newcomers **In Grief**. Hailing from Norway, this 5-piece plays their own brand of extreme metal, which can best be described as atmospheric progressive death metal. Each song has an epic feel to it, with lots of dynamic contrasts, tempo changes, memorable melodies, great riffing, and plenty of heaviness. Taking a chapter from bands like Opeth, the band is content to take their time to let a song build up before unleashing its fury on you, all the while appeasing the listener with well-crafted melodies and rhythms. Look for their 7-song debut, *Deserted Soul,* in early 2009. If you are into bands like Soilwork, Scar Symmetry, Amon Amarth, or just love great metal that isn't boring, then In Grief's debut will certainly satisfy. Check out their myspace at myspace.com/ingrief

The next (Mar/Apr) issue of *HM Magazine* includes articles on **Believer**, **Stryper**, **Impending Doom**, Dragonforce (Says), **A Plea For Purging**, **The Devil Wears Prada**, **The Ascendicate**. Isn't it about time you subscribed to HM, too?

METAL TRACKS

Page eight

HORNS UP!

I was wondering why three different guys are showing the Satanic Salute in the Aug/Sep issue of *Heaven's Metal*?
–Joe Walker, via internet

Doc – Joe, we'll let the band respond…

(Demon Hunter responds):
The hand gesture you refer to is known as the "corna" (Italian for "horns") and it has many meanings to many people across many cultures. Its most common meaning (and the one Demon Hunter intends when using it) is "rock n' roll!" or "heavy metal!" Its history is long and complex. The hand gesture can be traced to ancient Greece. It's similar to the symbol for "I love you" in American sign language. It's the symbol of the sports teams for the University of Texas (which is why there are pictures online of President George W. Bush using the "horns" sign – surely he doesn't mean anything about the Devil?!).

It is also a symbol used by some superstitious Italians to ward AGAINST evil. The heavy metal rocker Ronnie James Dio saw his grandmother using it with that purpose, and he adopted it for his stage show to basically mean "rock n' roll!" and since then it has become used by just about every heavy metal band you can name, MTV VJ's like Iann Robinson, athletes, pop stars, you name it, it is very common.

There are some so-called "devil worshippers" who attempted to STEAL the symbol in the 1960s, but that so-called religion is a very small minority and when people use the gesture, they basically just mean "ROCK!" The funk band Parliament-Funkadelic were using the symbol well before Ronnie James Dio, even.

It's also used by WCW wrestlers, by Spider-Man (when he's using his web shooters), by the Blue Man Group, in the Netherlands as the "buck greeting," in Israel on a popular children's TV show, in Turkey as a national symbol to represent a wolf's ears, and more. And finally, the symbol also means "two outs" in baseball.

Obviously, Demon Hunter is a CHRISTIAN BAND, and it has no other meaning than "rock n' roll" to us.

SACRAMENTAL TEARS

I was wondering if you know anything about the band Sacrament? They were one of my favs back in the day. I thought you might know where those guys have gone, what they are doing now, etc.?
Thanks.
–mwschaar@aol.com

Doc – Eric Ney and Mike DiDonato are currently working with Vonnie King, Jeff King and Joey Daub in the band Fountain of Tears. While their music is nothing akin to the thrash of Sacrament, it is well worth checking out (progressive goth rock/metal). Rumors of a Sacrament reunion exist, but have not been confirmed.

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[nothin' but] **News bullets**

With great regret we report that it seems the **Barren Cross** reunion is over before it started. **Mike Drive** (Lee) had this to say, "There is a great problem that has emerged within the band, and because of this, we will no longer be together. I am very sorry about this to all of you, as it had been recently anticipated to re-unite and release a new album. I cannot make this up to you; but as God is willing, I will continue to release similar albums of my own." For more information regarding the breakup, please visit michaeldrive.com or myspace.com/michaeldrive1 and myspace.com/jimlaverde. We encourage you to pray for all members of the band.

Retroactive Records is thrilled to announce the signing of the Brazilian thrash/speed metal band **Arnion**. Arnion's full length release, *Fall Like Leaves,* features articulate riffs, gripping hooks, and the muscular brute force that brings to mind Kreator, Ultimatum, Exodus, Tourniquet, and Austrian Death Machine! *Fall Like Leaves* (Expanded Edition) is digitally remastered and will include the band's 2003 *Refuge* EP as an added bonus for fans. The album is scheduled for a January 13th, 2009 release date. [myspace.com/arnionthrash]

The early line-up for the 3rd annual Legends of Rock (Germany) concert, slated for April 4, 2009, looks like this: **Bloodgood**, Tourniquet, **Grammatrain**, **Verra Cruz**, **Audiovision**, **Sarah Brendel**, **Class P. Jambor**, Bluetree, **Jens Bottcher** and **Outbreak Band**. [legendsofrock.de]

Bombworks Records is happy to announce the reissue of Mexican death metallers **Lament**'s sophomore album *Through the Reflection*. Lament has been a stalwart in the Mexican underground extreme scene for quite some time. Starting out as a death/grind outfit called **Beheaded**, the band changed its name to Lament as it embraced a more progressive/melodic death metal sound. Lament followed up their debut album *Tears of a Leper* with *Through the Reflection*, released on Finland's Little Rose Productions in 1999 in limited quantities. Overall, this is a very solid album that was unfortunately not heard by many due to its initial short run, and Bombworks Records is ready to let the world hear how great of an album this is. The release will feature all new artwork and, as a bonus, will also include the original 4-song Beheaded demo that was only ever previously available on cassette and provide a glimpse into Lament's brutal beginnings when they were playing all-out grind/death. *The Through the Reflection Special Edition* will be released in February 2009. [myspace.com/lamentmex]

The new **Impellitteri** album is now called *Wicked Maiden* and it is slated for release on January 21, 2009. [shoutlife.com/impellitteri]

Fire of Babylon's self-titled debut is now signed to Retroactive Records for U.S. distribution. Release date not available yet.

Paul Q-Pek (from **One Bad Pig**) has formed a new worship band called **Vertical Sound System**, which features **Phillip Owens** on drums, **Daniel Tucek** on bass; **Kira Q-Pek** on keyboards, and Paul and Kira's daughter, **Evangeline Q-Pek**, on guitar.

For more news, visit hmmag.com/heavensmetal

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK

Faith Factor – *Against A Darkened Sky*
Progressive power metal for fans of Rob Rock, Pyramaze, Sacred Warrior!

Deliverance – s/t:
The 1989 debut release from thrash/speed metal Icons! Digitally remastered, enhanced artwork, featuring 2 bonus tracks and extended liner notes.

Azmaveth – *Strong As Death*
A unique blend of black and death from Puerto Rico. For fans of Ancient, Dimmu Borgir, and Extol.

Menchen – *Red Rock*
All-Star lineup includes Bill Menchen (Titanic), Robert Sweet (Stryper), Tony Franklin (Blue Murder), and Ken Redding (His Witness).

Deliverance – *Weapons of Our Warfare*
1990 speed/thrash metal classic reissue digitally remastered with one bonus track and extended liner notes.

Bealiah – *Anthology of the Undead*
Brutal old-school black metal from Indonesia, for fans of Emperor, Immortal, and Dark Funeral.

Sympathy – *Anagogic Tyranny*
Brand new album of ultra technical, blackened death from Canada, for fans of Suffocation, Immolation, and Morbid Angel

Holy Blood – *The Patriot*
Brand new third album of folk / pagan metal from the Ukrainian masters, for fans of Finntroll, Ensiferum, Falkenbach, and Eluveitie.

RETROACTIVE RECORDS

His Witness – *Kingdom Come*
Originally recorded at the Elefante's Pakaderm Studio in 1989, remixed by Bill Menchen (Titanic/The Seventh Power).
Features powerful vocals and music for fans of Judas Priest, Whitecross, and Bloodgood!
myspace.com/wearehiswitness

My Silent Wake – *A Garland of Tears*
New album from masters of death/doom/folk arise with a whirlwind of dark metal for fans of Paramaecium and My Dying Bride.

BW Bombworks RECORDS

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THEOCRACY

(Within) The Mirror Of Souls

BY JONATHAN SWANK

POWER/PROG METAL IS DEMANDING, SO IT TAKES A LOT OF TALENT, MUSCLE AND CREATIVITY TO STAND OUT IN THIS SATURATED GENRE. THEOCRACY – MATT SMITH (BAND FOUNDER, VOCALS, GUITARS), JONATHAN HINDS (GUITARS), SHAWN BENSON (DRUMS) – ARE ONE OF THE FEW CHRISTIAN POWER METAL BANDS TO MAKE A CREDIBLE IMPACT IN THE SCENE – LARGELY DUE TO THE SUCCESS OF THEIR SELF-TITLED DEBUT BACK IN 2003, WHERE MATT HIMSELF SANG ALL OF THE VOCALS, PLAYED ALL OF THE INSTRUMENTS AND PRODUCED THE CD! NOW, AFTER FIVE LONG YEARS AND THE ADDITION OF TWO BAND MEMBERS, THE THREE-PIECE OUTFIT HAS RELEASED *MIRROR OF SOULS* (ULTERIUM RECORDS) – AN EPIC COLLECTION OF WORLD-CLASS METAL. "LISTEN IN" TO A RECENT INTERNET "CHAT" I HAD WITH THE MULTI-TALENTED, YET HUMBLE MAN BEHIND THE MAGICAL *MIRROR OF SOULS*.

JS: Hey man, how's it going?
MS: Good bro, and you?

Great… Well, *Mirror of Souls* in an incredible slab of metal. What do you hope to accomplish musically with this release that you were unable to with the debut? …And by the way, the debut was fantastic.
Hey, well thanks! Musically, we just kind of wanted to turn everything up a notch – better production, better singing, more energy due to actually having a real drummer this time, and so forth; while keeping the same quality of songwriting that we had on the debut.

Cool... Is there a defining element for you on the new album, a song perhaps that best represents everything Theocracy represents?
Oh yeah, definitely the title track. I feel like it's everything summed up and probably the best song I've written (and maybe ever will write). But then, I'm biased.

Yeah, that is the highlight, but the "demon" song is amazing as well.
Yeah that one's ("Laying the Demon to Rest") got a lot of attention so far, too. We figured it would, since it kinda stands out as being the most aggressive.

It's such a solid tune the whole way through … so metal. Well, the title track seems to branch out into the progressive realm – more so than any of the other songs on the disc. Tell me a bit about this song and your motivations for its creation?
You know, it all kind of runs together now, but I think I first had the idea for "Mirror of Souls" when I was thinking about how we often look at other people to judge our own state or our own righteousness. So, I got the image of a giant hall of mirrors, where the mirrors represent other people. So, we're basically looking at other people to see a reflection of ourselves, only – as the narrator of the song finds out – it's a

distorted view. And not until we look at ourselves in the light of God's holiness can we see ourselves for what we really are. But of course – at the end of the song – he goes to look at himself again and only sees the reflection of Christ, Who has taken his place in God's eyes. It's a beautiful picture.

Very beautiful ... that is so cool. Well, you seem to have a good balance lyrically. As a Christian artist, what is your approach to writing lyrics and how do you keep them from sounding trite in a world that has grown callous to Jesus "sound bites?"
Good question. It's hard sometimes ... like a song like "On Eagles' Wings," – which is basically a simple praise song of me being thankful – may sound simplistic. But all I can really do is go with my gut on these things and write what I'm feeling at a given moment, and hope that it will touch people or maybe make them think about certain things in a slightly different or unique way. And of course, the way things are worded is very important – avoiding some of the old rhyming clichés.

Your sincerity comes across in the lyrics … really.
Thanks … really appreciate that!

Our biggest show so far was the ProgPower USA Festival Showcase a couple of years ago. That was a lot of fun. But we've still only played local shows (we're finally heading to Europe next year), so it's all a work in progress.

When will you go back to ProgPower?
As a fan, next year; to play – good question! Hopefully sooner rather than later?

Ha ha, I like that. Theocracy, the name… Is this a literal 'theocracy' or is the meaning more spiritual, as you allude to in the song of the same name from the debut: the internal God governor, the "theocracy within?"
Exactly. That's how we think of it.

This may sound stupid, but did you ever think of naming the band Theocracy Within? It just sounds so prog cool.
I agree. I did, actually. That was going to be my fallback name if Theocracy was already taken, ha ha. It's funny how much flack we get for the name.

"...my goal ... is for it to be like a Theocracy 'greatest hits' album in the 'all killer, no filler, every song could potentially be somebody's favorite' kind of way."

Which artist (s) do you identify with, both musically and lyrically?
Well musically, I like a lot of the typical European power metal stuff (Avantasia, etc.) as well as your classic Maiden/Metallica/etc., plus some prog metal stuff (Fates Warning, etc.)... Actually, I think Hetfield was the one I learned the most from about how to phrase things to sound poetic and powerful. Lyrically, it's kind of two different questions... I don't really look at any other artists for that stuff. Like, my favorite other Christian artist is Neal Morse (one of the greatest songwriters ever IMO), but his lyrics are more straightforward and personal than mine (that's his approach and he does it well, and it fits his kind of music). I don't think any one approach is necessarily better, just different.

Songwriting: Is it a blessing or a curse for you? Does it come quickly or is it a struggle? The strength of Theocracy seems to be in the songwriting and vocals.
Thanks. That's definitely my passion. Let's see... I would definitely say it's a blessing, because it's what I love. It is often very difficult, though. Sometimes things come quick, but often I struggle to put it together. The struggles are usually in the arrangements: figuring out how to transition smoothly from one section to another. I don't like parts that don't seem to fit, and I don't like excess parts that could be trimmed off (says the guy with a 23-minute song). So, I usually have plenty of ideas, but putting it together sometimes takes a lot of time and I don't like to rush it.

Singing vs. playing guitar… Which do you prefer and why?
Singing. I like playing guitar, but I basically only picked up the guitar in high school, so I could write songs (I was already writing lyrics). So it's fun, but it's not necessarily a huge passion of mine like it is for some people.

Yeah, I notice there aren't a lot of guitar solos going on … but the strength of the songs, the riffs and the melodies makes it almost unnoticeable.
Thanks! I appreciate that because sometimes I feel inadequate, because I'm only a so-so soloist. That's actually something I've started working hard on. Our guitarist, Jon, is quite better at soloing than me.

Theocracy live… What is the biggest venue you've played and how do you "bring it" live in a way that will make Theocracy stand out in a saturated prog/power genre?
Ooh, interesting question... To be honest, I'd have to say we're still figuring that out.

Why the flack?
People just don't get it. It's right there in the lyrics! I guess they think we're proponents of government-enforced religion.

We have recently been enjoying the resurgence of bands like Metallica, Megadeth, Iron Maiden and AC/DC – bands that made a huge impact in the metal world 20 years ago or more. Why do you think these bands have made comebacks?
The resurgence is just because everything goes in cycles. Usually 20-year cycles, for whatever reason. Trends are so silly! "Oh, I love these guys!!" (5 minutes later) "These guys are so played out!" (5 minutes later) "I can't BELIEVE I used to like those guys! What was I thinking?" (5 minutes later) "Man, those guys were AWESOME!!!"

Yep, pretty much… As a follow up to that question, how do you think/hope metal fans will see the music of Theocracy in 20 years?
The band that never released a filler song.

Amen, that is a great answer ... and I will attest that you haven't so far! In fact, that's what makes Theocracy so great … every song is so catchy.
Thanks a lot! I actually wrote most of the third album during this long interim as well, and my goal for that one is for it to be like a Theocracy "greatest hits" album in the "all killer, no filler, every song could potentially be somebody's favorite" kind of way. Like the debut Boston disc or something. (Just meant in quality of song)

Awesome. Well Matt, thanks for doing this chat thing. It saves me a lot of work, ha ha!
Ha ha, awesome. Well thank you very much! As I said, it's an honor and we appreciate it. Yeah, this was actually a cool way to do it.

Okay, thanks Matt. Take it easy.
Thanks again and talk to you later!

HEAVENS METAL

GKB
Glenn Kaiser's Faithfulness

INTERVIEW BY DOUG VAN PELT

THE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIAN ROCK'S FIRST HEAVY BAND, GLENN KAISER, HAS KEPT BUSY SINCE THE QUIET RETIREMENT OF RESURRECTION BAND. HIS BLUES ROCK OUTFIT, APTLY TITLED GLENN KAISER BAND, PUTS OUT TASTEFUL, SPIRITED, AND ENERGETIC BLUES ROCK. THE GUY KNOWS THE GOD HE'S SINGING ABOUT AND, IN TERMS OF SONGWRITING AND LEGITIMATE BLUES COMPOSITION, HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING THERE, TOO. I'D BEEN MEANING TO PULL HIM ASIDE AND SEE WHERE HIS HEART WAS AT CONCERNING THE CHANGES THE CHRISTIAN HARD MUSIC SCENE HAS EXPERIENCED OVER THE YEARS, AND THE RELEASE OF HIS LATEST ALBUM, *OCTANE*, WAS AS GOOD EXCUSE AS ANY TO SIT DOWN AND TALK.

DV: I promise to talk about the new GKB album later, but first I want to get into something that I've been curious about for the past few years. I'll break these questions into three major related questions:
A. How have you remained faithful to the Lord for all these years? What are the keys to your success as a disciple of Jesus?
GK: I've remained faithful to the extent (far from perfect) that I have the same as any Christ-follower could or does, by God's daily present grace! To further unpack that, being in the Word of God near daily, having a continually growing prayer life (as in, praying to God all through my waking hours rather than merely thinking, reading, listening and talking with people) and of course, genuine on-going accountability with my pastors, wife and other leaders close at hand. Hopefully, with a growing humilty as I'm more and more aware of my many areas of lacking maturity... This helps me to seek Him more via His Word, prayer and constant open discussion with those more mature in Christ than I who I know I can trust from many years of close relationship to each of them.
B. Compared to a couple decades ago, where people would have made a fuss about smoking or (gasp) cussing, attitudes have changed among the kids/ young adults that come to Cornerstone Festival. How have you and the board of elders at JPUSA (who I assume still have a deep pastor's/shepherd's heart for these young people) dealt with this? How has it impacted you personally? How has your heart responded to the changing attitudes? How have you distilled what's essential/important and what's non-essential? I guess a good way to put that would be "how have you extracted the precious from the worthless?" What are the good things you notice from these generations? What are the concerns that trouble you?
Well, regarding the concerns first: I'd say smoking and coarse language still trouble us all, and from time to time we speak out about it, while far more troubling matters would include things such as acting out sexually (without biblical standards or a sense of responsibility), lack of real concern for the Bible's truths, just basic double-mindedness or lack of following Jesus in their daily walk rather than simply chasing culture/sub-culture, these come to mind as more far-reaching issues.

I think part of the response God calls older Christians (hopefully in terms of spiritual maturity as well as age...) to offer at Cstone and beyond is that the the balance must include straight talk AND patience with mercy. We try to be more gracious in our delivery of the truth about these issues. We've realized as most older believers often do, that it's in the on-going relationships you can form with people that in the end seem to affect younger generations deepest. Not the drive-by sermon or simply blasting Truth at people. At the same time we share scriptures that seem to really nail the issues, but hopefully do it with more love and real sensitivity than when we (or "I" at least!) did when we were younger. More light, a little less heat maybe...

I and those in leadership at JPUSA are blessed to the sky with many of those at

the Festival as well as here at JPUSA and specifically in our Project 12 Bible/Discipleship school in that so many are really serious about seeking and growing in both relationship to Jesus as well as doing something more with their lives than simply living for this or that personal (often "cushy") whim. While fellowship can have a downside – party and keep things surface and fun with zero challenge for spiritual growth – there are a lot of young Christians who are simply seeking Genuine Christ-followers (note GENUINE) who apparently live as close to God and His Word day-in, day-out. When they find such people they like to be near them... but they also understand the cost of growing up. The cool thing is a lot of younger Christians are just tired of surface Christian living and shallow Christian events. They seem to be seeking meat in daily life, and a bit less desert, you know? So I'd say that's very encouraging.

Mind you, every individual in every generation has to decide if she or he is going to play the "dumb-down, surface" game of fellowship or, on the other hand, really FOLLOW Jesus and hang close with those who apparently take Him seriously in all their choices. This is constant throughout church history, so in that sense, nothing's much changed from the Jesus movement days – there were followers and day/week/month/year-trippers who split from Him and His people then just as there are now.

C. How has your theology changed over the years in the specific area of personal holiness/behavior, like cussing, smoking, drinking?

None. Hasn't changed a bit. I put these in the dumpster at 18 when I truly began to surrender to Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I don't do 'em, don't recommend 'em, speak out about them from time to time when I think someone is open to hear about 'em. Don't need 'em, don't want 'em, don't expect I'll have to apologize for not doing 'em when I see Jesus at the end of this!

Have you noticed an increased permissiveness amongst Christians of the younger generations in the past decade? What sort of changes have you seen? Please contrast the weaknesses and strengths you see in the "post-modern" or "emerging" church movement(s). What's an example of some of the prayers you and your partners in ministry pray for the young folks attending Cornerstone?

I think generally, morals – may – have slipped, but with the internet, zillions of cable channels, less real linking with people who love and serve God and take His Word seriously in their daily life, I suspect as kids grow up they simply mirror what they've been taught (or not taught) by example. I suppose generally there's less restraint in culture and subcultures, so there'd be less with those at Cstone as well, at least in small, basic areas.

"Po-mo" and emerging/emergent church concepts are wide and varied, but in short as I see it, there is simply a re-thinking and – at times good, other times pretty slack – challenging of older established "ways of doing church" or even "being church" by the movement. Time will tell, as it always does; but we think there are many good points in really examining WHAT and WHY we as Christ-followers interact or don't interact with those who we might call pre-believers. (smiles) Then there are a few folks who are working so hard at not offending anyone that the Good News (which God's Word refers to as "an offense") is left a bit outside the conversation – though again, I love the term "conversation," as that's the only way any of us can build solid relationships with people – whether they follow Jesus or as yet, don't. So, it's a mixed view that we have about all this at present.

In essence we pray God will reveal Himself to them to such an extent that the model is truly less important to them than He and His Word are. I think that's a mistake many believers have made in most if not all generations. God IS bigger than the church!

How was the reunion with Resurrection Band this summer? Tell me about the cost-benefit between rehearsals and whatnot and the experience. Describe the experience (either preparation and/or actual performance) for us, please.

It was fun, really fun. I mean, it took some work but REZ only did 3 shows this summer and made two important choices: slow the songs down a bit, so we can sing 'em and not kill John on the drums... and also dropped tuning to D (where E chords were actually a true D); therefore, making it easier for myself and Wendi to nail the high notes! It seemed to work, ha! There is interest in Germany and Switzerland for a tour in Spring of '09, so we may well be doing about 7 more shows like that. But really, it was fun. The really hard part was choosing what songs to do and which to leave out... 16 records against about an hour and fifteen minute set meant a lot of thinning out... but the audiences seemed to really dig the sets.

How are things going with Glenn Kaiser Band? How often do you play? Where? What are your goals and expectations with this musical group?

GKB has been a blast and frankly, is really easy to do – Ed and Roy are just superb brothers in the Lord as well as musicians, etc., and I get to pretty much do what I feel fits the songs and the audience on the night – very cool. We play all over the place, U.S., Canada, overseas tours, etc.. Truth is some of my fave shows are semi-small coffeehouses, where there's a mix of young and older people, old REZ heads who love blues and kids who often right then discover they like it too (smiles). Really been refreshing to interact after shows. But we book tours trying to (as always) key in on our families, JPUSA community, Grrr Records and other (in my case) pastoral and Project 12 responsibilities... We just pray and sort out requests little by little. There are a good number of on-going invitations that we just fill as we're able to make sense out of all our schedules. Goals and expectations are to encourage people to seek and follow Jesus and His Word, to hear His story and theirs within a blues/rock context. We do a fair number of "secular" as well as Christian biker's shows, festivals and so on, like the Ottawa (Canada) Blues Festival, played the Basel (Switzerland) Blues Festival this year, etc., were up at Sturgis Bike Rally for 4 days of shows, etc.. Good opportunities to share Jesus in places that don't often get such stuff!

What in particular are you pleased with about this latest release, *Octane*?

It strikes me as a fairly mature bit of music for GKB, about right for where we're at as a band now. I'm very blessed by the songs; Roy's tunes; the cover tunes as well. Just have been blown away by the reviews. I like the broad aspect of the music, trying to not get stuck in "12-bar blues only land" and am happy we were again able to avoid that, yet put some (in my view) strong songs and strong messages in 'em. Really fun songs to play live, too; and we'll be adding more all through the 2009 shows. I'm loving playing slide more and more.

HEAVENS METAL

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ORANGE SKY

What Orange Sky Says

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS GATTO

"COME TO THE ISLANDS," THE BAND TELLS ME, "YOU WON'T REGRET IT." AUTUMN IS JUST STARTING TO USHER IN COLDER WEATHER HERE IN THE NORTHEAST, SO IN MY MIND'S EYE I'M ALREADY KICKING BACK ON A TROPICAL BEACH ON BEAUTIFUL TRINIDAD WITH A COLD DRINK IN HAND… "OWWW!" I HOLLER AS MY REVERIE IS BROKEN BY A PIECE OF EQUIPMENT SMACKING ME IN THE FACE WHILE DAYDREAMING THE NEXT DAY AT WORK.

When you hear a band like Orange Sky, you realize just how much of an international language metal is. These five dark-skinned natives of the island nation of Trinidad are something to behold in action: dread locks flailing all over the stage to the wailing riffs of metal guitars. You can easily hear 70's, 80's, and 90's metal influences filtered through the band's native tongue of reggae. They were weaned on American rock radio, and when asked about their influences they rattle off every band from Sabbath to Limp Bizkit, with Bob Marley thrown in for good measure.

Orange Sky – formed around the nucleus of brothers Nigel and Nicholas Rojas – quickly became a force too big for their island home and set sail for broader shores to make a name for themselves. They cut their teeth touring with Yngwie Malmsteen in 2005 and 2006, and with Dokken in 2008, as well as playing with Kansas and their heroes Scorpions. Their debut album *Upstairs* is still available through CD Baby, while the current album *Dat Is Voodoo* was released this year on Star City Recordings.

I witnessed firsthand tonight the band's mercy and poise in dealing with an unscrupulous promoter that left them without an advertised show. Thus, the scheduled tour date became an impromptu interview as I hung out with the band and made their acquaintance. I talked mostly with singer Nigel and drummer Obasi, as we dined on pizza and discussed cultural differences, food, gas prices, unfair anti-smoking laws, ganja, family life, and of course our mutual love for all things heavy metal.

When asked about the voodoo imagery on the album, Nigel traces the history of voodoo from Africa to his island, concluding that voodoo has cultural ties to Trinidad, but is spoken of in somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion today and has no real power. In fact, he says the album title *Dat Is Voodoo* is a popular expression that is used in the same context where we might say "That rocks!"

Plied for information about my favorite song on the new album, "Yesterdays and Tomorrows," Nigel laughs and says that it's about corrupt politicians, a subject we agree is common ground in every culture. Throughout the conversation, Nigel bursts into song often, punctuating statements he makes with his own song lyrics.

Cautiously I broach the subject of faith that I read between the lines in Orange Sky's music. Nigel answers, "We're Christians. We're all Christians – believe in Jesus, baptized. Trinidad is traditionally Catholic, though other religions can be found there." He goes on to say, "We're not evangelists, though. So many others do that – we're just … it's just not us." We talk about Jesus' message, which he summarizes as "showing love and peace to all men." "That's our message," he says, "showing love to mankind, being positive in a dark world." I agree with him that Orange Sky provokes people to think about life with open-ended questions like, "Where do we go when we die? Who paints the rainbows in the sky?" from the song "Rainbows." Another song from their first album is mentioned and he and Obasi sing it to me.

I change the subject, asking if people compare them to POD, with whom the band is unfamiliar. The names Skindred and Bad Brains are bandied about. Asked about the fanzine itself, I explain what *Heaven's Metal* is all about, and we start talking about Christian metal bands. Nigel makes a statement that "Christian metal bands are brave," which he never qualifies, as we are interrupted by the arrival of another pizza. I explain the "What So and So Says" interviews and reassure the band that I'm not trying to portray Orange Sky as being a Christian band, we simply discuss faith and metal in these type articles. Nigel thinks about this and agrees, but later adds, "It's ok to call us a Christian metal band. I mean, we're all Christians, so that's a truthful statement." We talk some more metal, take pictures, and then go our own ways as new friends. I can't help but smile now as I imagine Jesus with tattoos and dread locks and wonder what His definition of evangelism might be. [theorangesky.com]

MY SILENT WAKE

Assuaging A Garland Of Fears

INTERVIEW BY LOYD HARP

MOST OF US WOULD PROBABLY CONFESS THAT DURING A TIME OF HARDSHIP OR CRISIS, THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN REPLACE A GOOD FRIEND COMING ALONGSIDE – TO COMFORT AND TO SHARE THE WEIGHT OF THE BURDEN; SOMEONE WISE, EMPATHETIC AND GROUNDED IN THE REALITY OF LIVING WITHIN A FALLEN WORLD. ONE SUCH BAND – MY SILENT WAKE – MUSICALLY AND LYRICALLY EMBODIES THESE QUALITIES; AND LIKE THAT COMFORTING FRIEND, THEIR MELANCHOLY DOOM METAL – QUITE PARADOXICALLY – IS MEDICINE FOR YOUR SOUL. OUR OWN LOYD HARP – TEMPORARILY SERVING IN THE U.K. – RECENTLY CAUGHT UP WITH ENGLAND'S OWN IAN ARKLEY (SEVENTH ANGEL, ASHEN MORTALITY) TO DISCUSS MY SILENT WAKE'S LATEST RELEASE, *A GARLAND OF TEARS*, AND SOME TOUGH ISSUES REGARDING DOUBT IN FAITH.

LH: My Silent Wake recently played NordicFest. How was the crowd response to the band?
IA: The fest is always a pleasure to play! We love going there and we love the people there and the great atmosphere. This year was even better than last year, because both Seventh Angel and MSW played and we all had a fantastic time together. We had a lot of great feedback from both gigs and the crowd was very responsive during both sets. It was also enjoyable seeing the other great bands there, such as Dalit and Morgenroede and Slechtvalk.

Catch us up on what's been happening with the band since the release of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*.
We have played quite a lot of gigs now since *Anatomy*… We have played various UK gigs and also played Switzerland and Norway (twice). We have recorded and released our third album *A Garland of Tears* and we have also done some other recording. Last year we did two promo videos, which we hope to release next year.

MSW has a new record out. How has the band, the writing, the playing progressed since that ambitious and creative double disc?
We have incorporated more and more ideas from the various members of the band, and I feel that the band is improving as a result. I also feel we have found our own sound more on this album. This album was much easier to record than the last one and it has a nice live feel to it. The recording process was similar to the debut, in that it was recorded live with additional overdubs. We always want to be free to express ourselves in whatever way we see fit … this may include even more diverse styles in future.

What role does faith play into the creative process of My Silent Wake (if any)?
As we have stated many times, the band is made up of people of differing beliefs and we are not a Christian band. The lyrics on the new album were written by three of us. Sometimes a person's personal faith or lack of it, or spiritual ideas will indeed be a part of the lyrics. Because our lyrics are very real and very important to us all, there are often some very deep thoughts contained within the lyrics.

Have you found your audience(s) to be receptive to this sort of collaboration? Or are there some in your audience who are critical to this open approach concerning faith issues?
Very receptive and open minded generally. I have come across no more than two people who have been stupid about this, so that's pretty encouraging. The band is not there as any kind of mission or tool, it is an expression of ourselves, and

"The band is made up of people of differing beliefs and we are not a Christian band. The lyrics on the new album were written by three of us. Sometimes a person's personal faith or lack of it, or spiritual ideas will indeed be a part of the lyrics."

as such it is very honest; and I think people generally appreciate the honesty and the openness of My Silent Wake.

Do you ever find it a struggle to live up to the expectations of others (e.g. fans, record labels, stores, etc.) vs. meeting your own expectations as artists?
I do not try to live up to anyone's expectations, be they fans or otherwise. I am myself and that is all I will ever be. I will not try to hide the fact that I have doubts in my faith and that I am a normal person living a relatively normal life. I really don't care if anyone chooses not to listen to us anymore because we aren't safe and predictable, but I think anyone that chooses to judge others needs to think carefully before they do, especially when things are said over the internet for anyone to see.

Have you had negative experiences with this?
Yes, we have had some negative experiences on the internet, but mainly it has been positive. I have seen some people being really nasty on forums, so we have been pretty lucky.

Why do you think people, in particular believers, find it difficult to talk about doubts?
Some people are afraid of them, because some need to feel secure all the time and as if everything is taken care of. Life just isn't like that; things change and turn around and you could be somewhere completely different with a different set of people in 5 years time and be just that little bit older and wiser. The more you go on in life the less you realize that you really know. The questions just keep coming and the answers are hard to find. I just like to keep an open mind and continue on my journey. I don't like to discuss too much with the whole world as it is a personal thing and people judge you on it (sadly). I have been amazed at the judgment poured on certain members of other bands just because someone has dared to state that they have different views to the mainstream. It is really sickening. Have a look at our lyrics to "Heretic" for our take on this.

How has the response to My Silent Wake differed in the various countries you've played in or released records in? Do you think the setting of some fans also plays into how comfortable they are with the faith stance of the band, discussing doubts, etc.?
I think the whole faith thing shouldn't be such an issue and to be honest I find most people that enjoy Christian metal enjoy normal metal, too. It would be wrong to class us as a Christian band (it is unfair to the members that are atheist/agnostic for a start), but we are happy to play at Christian festivals where we have been accepted with open arms so far by some lovely people. I think that the fact that we are intelligent people who think things through and care about people has an impact on a lot of our fans and they see things in us that they might not see in other bands. We will never go out to deliberately offend anyone and we sing about things that we experience and think about. As for the other part of the question, I am not sure if it is a country thing, but certainly in Switzerland and Norway they have been extremely kind to us. In England we have only played rock pubs/clubs so far and have had some good crowds, but the numbers tend to be low these days. I think this is due to the smoking ban. London is always a good place to play. We have never played America, but I know we have many fans there. I have found that anyone who has met us so far from whatever country they come from has enjoyed spending time with us and has accepted us.

Cool. What advice would you offer to a young band starting out?
To be true to who you are and not try to be like another band musically or lyrically. I think it is good to be influenced by other bands to a degree, but it's never a good idea to copy. Write your lyrics about things that you have experience with (or a good knowledge of) and be honest. Also, practice … a lot.

Surf this: ulterium-records.com, solidstate.com, opengraverecords.com, bombworksrecords.com, veridonmusic.com,

ALBUM REVIEWS

THEOCRACY

MIRROR OF SOULS

Five years in the making and one of the most anticipated Christian metal releases in recent memory, the follow-up to Theocracy's spectacular self-titled debut is finally here. As good as the first album was, there were a few common complaints. All of these have been addressed on *Mirror of Souls*, resulting in a power metal masterpiece. First, instead of the programmed drums on the debut, Theocracy is now a full band, and Shawn Benson's drumming helps to develop the album's numerous time changes in ways that simply couldn't be done on the first album. Second, there were instances on the debut when lead singer Matt Smith stretched beyond the comfort of his vocal range. On *Mirror of Souls*, Matt's singing is more powerful and confident than ever. Furthermore, he is an absolute genius at creating vocal melodies. Rare is it to hear choruses that are more memorable than these. The final complaint about the first album was that the production was a bit thin. This is not an issue on *Mirror of Souls*, thanks in part to guitarist Jon Hinds, whose playing provides a heavier and fuller sound. The new album is definitely heavier, as exemplified by the borderline-thrash moments on the song "Laying the Demon to Rest." This song – along with the epic 22-minute title track – are the album's highlights. Despite the increased intensity, the album retains a positive aura, with lyrics that are well balanced between praise and tribulation, without being the least bit preachy. *Mirror of Souls* is not only my vote for album of the year, it's a landmark release that should be required listening for all fans of heavy metal. [Ulterium] Chris Beck

BECOMING THE ARCHETYPE

DICHOTOMY

If you are a fan of progressive death metal – and BTA in particular – then you may agree with me that everything this band creates is exceptionally good. And you may also agree that with each release they continue to evolve and expand. This time around the songs are shorter, more direct and more diverse – with a huge focus on Jason's vocals. Metal genius Devin Townsend (Strapping Young Lad, Devin Townsend Band) was brought on as producer, so these tunes are layered and textured to the max, which gives every song a crushing, yet cinematic feel. Conceptual, the lyrics deal with the "dichotomous" struggles of machine vs. man and intellect vs. faith – a great reminder of how, to our own demise, we often negate the intangible in pursuit of the tangible. These guys are doing for Christian extreme metal what Living Sacrifice did in the 90's – garnering credibility. With their commitment to brutal music that is technically brilliant yet spiritually provoking, they exemplify all the best qualities in metal circa 2008. [Solid State] Jonathan Swank

ONCE DEAD

VISIONS OF HELL

If you are a *Heaven's Metal* reader you will know that this is the long-awaited recording from a band that started as a Vengeance Rising reunion and became a super group that reads like a who's who in metal. *Visions of Hell* is an album that perfectly blends the old and new schools of extreme metal, encompassing speed metal, death metal, grindcore, thrash, doom, and hardcore. The guitars and drums are relentless, while vocals range from Lamb of God styling to hardcore delivery. The album's pinnacle is the title track, which certainly has an early Trouble feel to it. Once Dead is a worthy successor to many of the true classics of the genre. Here's hoping we won't have to wait as long for the next beatdown. My pick of the year. [Open Grave] Chris Gatto

SYMPATHY

ANAGOGIC TYRANNY

Combining the elements of early Mortification, the technical black metal of early Extol and even progressive Believer thrash, this Canadian trio has delivered a veritable feast for fans of death and extreme metal. There are some seriously fast, crushing riffs going on here courtesy of Jeff Lewis (*Relentless* era Mortification) and band founder/veteran Derek From aka "Dharok" (who also handles all the mostly guttural low death growls). The big surprise for me, though, was the addition of Jim Austin (drummer on the first three Into Eternity releases), who hammers out a Jayson Sherlock quality performance. From the "heady" lyrics to the fantastic production, this is truly "total brutal." Highly recommended. [Bombworks] Jonathan Swank

HARMONY

CHAPTER II: AFTERMATH

Bearing a striking resemblance to Darkwater's album (*Calling the Earth To Witness)*, one of the better releases from last year, is unsurprising considering the bands are the same except for the bassists. *Aftermath*, however, also has a strong Narnia influence – heavy, crunching guitars and a less progressive emphasis. With so many great recent releases – Theocracy and Driver among them – *Aftermath* will hold its own for years to come due to its professionalism and memorable songs. [Ulterium] Chris Beck

TRENCHES

THE TIDE WILL SWALLOW US WHOLE

When a Christian band chooses not to include a lyric sheet, undoubtedly there is a reason. Either vocals are clear enough not to need them (not so here), or they're not important. On *The Tide*, the listening experience is so full, that the vocals are simply another instrument in the sound palette. It is intended that the listener not analyze rational thoughts, but dive into the sonic pool, soaking everything up until one is drenched. Presented here is Christendom's first offering toward the ambient/drone metal genre, not too unlike Isis, Jesu, Cave-In, Zozobra, etc. Jimmy Ryan (ex-Haste the Day) delivers both his signature raspy-growl, and moves into some powerful sung vocals (do NOT think screamo). Is it heavy? Yes, but not in the way you might expect. Your ears are pummeled with riffs and washes of thick sludgy heaviness, without being brutalized by speed, tired breakdowns or any other standard post-metalcore trademarks. [Solid State] Loyd Harp

INEXORDIUM

S/T

This disc offers us intense groove laden death metal. Sure, this is the first offering from this band, but there really are veteran players here. Basically, this is the band Paramaecium, playing songs with a touch more aggressive flavor than before. I found the first few songs to be okay, but this disc really seems to start growing on you around the midpoint and really stays great until the end. [Veridon Music] Michael Larson

Surf this: bombworksrecords.com, retroactiverecords.net, solidstate.com, insideout.de, metalheaven.net, roweproductions.com, e3recordings.com, metalblade.com

MY SILENT WAKE

A GARLAND OF TEARS

Enjoying doom metal requires a lot of patience; but with a sober, reflective frame of mind and a set of really good headphones (or a quality sound system cranked up to "11") this music can be miraculously therapeutic. Ian Arkley and company have nearly perfected this art of healing with their third release – a very heavy outpouring of classically tinged doom/death metal. Ian's unique voice – mixed melodic and growling – combined with bone chilling, "sounds like an amplified cello" guitars are reminiscent of Virgin Black, a band with whom they surprisingly share many qualities. Breathtaking and revitalizing at the same time, *Garland* is a world-class heavy metal catharsis. [Bombworks] Jonathan Swank

FAITH FACTOR

AGAINST A DARKENED SKY

From the epic orchestral opus to the closing "Sinner's Prayer," NJ's own Faith Factor's full-length debut ebbs and soars with a twin axe attack showcased around the multi-octave vocals of former Deadly Blessing singer Ski. The missionary metal band punches out credible, high quality Apostle (80's) meets Rivera/Bomma (00's) true metal that recently won it a coveted slot at Germany's Keep It True Fest. That festival lends its name to the standout cut of the album, an anthem proudly hailing both the metal flag and the shield of faith, while name dropping many of metal's surviving pioneers. Classic metal fans lamenting the lost art of operatic vocals will want to snatch up this American power metal release and raise your fists high. Who says great traditional heavy metal is always an import from Britain, Germany, or Brazil? [Retroactive] Chris Gatto

DEMON HUNTER

45 DAYS

I guess this is a 2 DVD/ 1 CD release. I only received the 2 DVD's, so I cannot comment on the CD. The documentary part of this is absolutely inspiring. I think we get caught up in how a band sounds and their style so much that we (the church) fail to see the importance of those bands and how they impact the world, even when we believe whole heartedly that bands like Demon Hunter do have an impact. This was a much needed reminder. [Solid State] Michael Larson

[*Doc – The CD contains original music from the film 45 Days – mostly acoustic guitar/piano and ambient/ atomospheric – plus acoustic versions of "Fading Away" and "Carry Me Down."*]

AMASEFFER

SLAVES FOR LIFE

What a beautifully crafted album. The story of Exodus told to music – brilliantly composed and perfectly executed. This is the first part of a trilogy dealing with Old Testament Israel. The honor they bestow upon this story is inspiring. Mixing styles of music and creating an amazing atmosphere, much like a soundtrack to a movie. I took the band's advice and sat down and read Exodus while listening. Perfect! [InsideOut Music] Michael Larson

FIRES OF BABYLON

S/T

A "super" group recording project of sorts, FOB features the powerful pipes of Rob Rock (need I give his resume?), guitarist Lou St. Paul (Winters Bane), bassist Kelly Conlon (ex-Death), and drummer Robert Falzano (Shatter Messiah, ex-Annihilator). The result is a slightly darker power metal than we're used to hearing from Rob Rock, while containing all of what you'd expect: the wall of heavy precision guitar riffage; the steady powerful double bass drumming; all together bringing forth another powerful melodic metal release with bold Christian lyrics and excellent production. If you are a fan of Rob's other work, you should find plenty to love on this one, too.
[Metal Heaven] Jeff McCormack

MORTIFICATION

LIVE HUMANITARIUM (DVD)

Live Planetarium (1993) was the last real live Mortification I had experienced, so I was not sure what to expect now. I was pleasantly surprised – musically the band was spot on and the video and sound qualities on this concert are excellent. Closing your eyes, you get a great sounding live brutal band. Opening your eyes, you see Steve Rowe's big smiling face as he belts out his death growls with ease. The smile kind of contradicts the musical feel at first, but after watching all of the great bonus concept and live clips, and the home video segments, you know Steve has quite a bit to smile over considering his health situation. This captures a great show in front of a small crowd of enthusiastic fans, and the two-disc set is a fun look at a band with an amazing history.
[Nuclear Blast] Jeff McCormack

FLASKAVSAE / LIGHT SHALL PREVAIL

S/T

This is a fun release. Two semi-mysterious black metal bands, who both play in the raw yet somewhat atmospheric vein of things, and yet who sound completely different. Flaskavsae use simplistic rhythms and some occasional ambient and psychedelic leanings, countered with incredibly distorted vocals. Light Shall Prevail are more raw and yet more accessible at the same time with a slightly more traditional BM sound. The vocals are upfront and raw, some of the better vocals in the unblack scene. Both bands are upfront about their faith, with the liner notes including the entire chapters of Psalm 22 and 23 within the full-color digi-pak booklet. [EEE Recordings] Loyd Harp

AUSTRIAN DEATH MACHINE / VARIOUS ARTISTS

TOTAL BRUTAL / A VERY BRUTAL CHRISTMAS

You can't take life too seriously, and this album is proof. This side band (read side-show) of As I Lay Dying frontman Tim Lambesis dishes up some tasty metal (more in the thrash vein than his usual fare) centered around his love for the "Guvenator"'s movies. Tim plays all the instruments with a little help from some friends and a cheesy "Ahnold" impersonator for a comedy metal album that is still funny after a few spins. *Total Brutal* is a full-length album of surprising quality, while *A Very Brutal Christmas* features hilarious renditions of "Jingle Bells" and "Hellbent for Leather" with 1 track from the full length. True genius or nutcase – you be the judge. [Metal Blade] Chris Gatto

Album Reviews cont'd on page 22

PASTOR BOB'S INTERNATIONAL REPORT

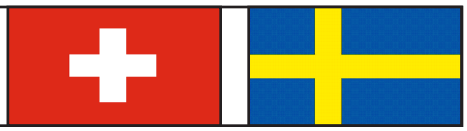
By Pastor Bob

It has been 10 years now that I have been traveling and speaking at Christian Metal festivals throughout the world. It's been great to meet Christian metalheads in Sweden, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, China, Finland, Norway, England, Wales, Israel, Mexico, Holland and many more. As 2009 opens up, there are a lot of new open doors. It will be a year of variety: from speaking at an "Un-black Ski Weekend in the Alps" to CloverStone – a new festival sponsored by Sanctuary Northern Ireland. The more I travel, the more I realize that it isn't really about the music. It is about the fellowship. People attend the festivals from all over the world to be with people who are like-minded, and who will encourage their walk with the Lord. I hope you can join us "somewhere" in the world this year!

[*myspace.com/pastorbobbeeman*]

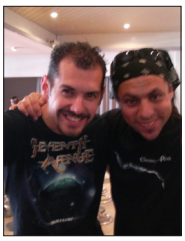
Argentia, Switzerland, Sweden & metal

Federico E. Dikowiec, Samuel Hug & Robin Svedman



Federico E. Dikowiec
Resistencia, Chaco, Argentina

In the last year, the Christian metal in Argentina has grown greatly. The power of the metal has gotten into the media and thanks to that we gain respect each day. There are many metal bands and musicians who were not Christians and are now on our side for finding peace in their lives. One of the best voices of metal, Argentine Mario Ian, called a friend who sang in a band (Rata Blanca, very heavy metal) heard. Today Mario Ian is a leading voice of the metal and the youth follow him by his life experiences. We also have another friend, Pablo Olivares, who was singing Satan and messages against God and today is an example to follow. Logos is a band that left the V8 and destruction of their messages and saves lives today with his lyrics against the devil. There are many Christian metal bands with a message of life, such as Boanerges, Barni, Crucial, Ian Mario, Pablo Olivares and Friends among others. Thank God there are churches in Buenos Aires that their leaders are metal and punk and they help other young people to leave their problems. I'm very happy for the growth of Christian Metal in Argentina and my desire is to be able to hear bands like Stryper, Mortification, Narnia, Deliverance … my favorite Bride and many more. As a kid I heard Petra and Guardian, which changed my heart and I hear more metal than ever and I'm going for more. Blessings from Argentina to all the people of the Christian metal.



Samuel Hug, pastor (EoR) Switzerland

Everything started in autumn of 2003. The successful years of metal in Europe were long over and the revival of metal hadn't started. At that time, a few young people met on a Swiss Christian internet board, sharing a heart for heavy metal and the spreading of the Gospel. Soon they took the risk to organize – at rather short notice – a 2-day festival called Elements of Rock (EoR). The fest, with its int'l line-up, got quite a response at the first edition in early spring '04: 500 visitors. With the big help of our spiritual fathers, Bob Beeman and Jim LaVerde, a day program with services and teachings was organized. In the meantime, the fest became a sort of family meeting of the Christian metal scene in the area. Very important for this development was our internet board: tavern.unblack.com. By now, the festival even earned a name in the secular scene, though there's still a lot to be done there. We need to develop an appropriate media communication. Also, the organization of the festival needs to improve. Gladly, we could work out the financial problems of the first 4 years with support from a lot of young metalheads. But the festival is only one piece of the whole puzzle, and there is much to do in the future. We need a coordination of the activities in the Swiss Christian scene, discipling and coaching of bands and musicians and heavy metal services. But in the end, we have gained nothing by only creating a good, organized, true-looking Christian metal ghetto. Our heart and activities have to go where the unreached are. It's great what God already did with us in Switzerland. Let's pray for more!

Robin Svedman
Stockholm, Sweden

Hailz to you all-righteous metal-lovers! I play drums in the Swedish Christian black metal band, Admonish. So what's going on "over here" underneath the pines of the Scandinavian woods? Well, first off, I would like to say that it very much reminds me of an Entmoot in terms of (un)hastiness! I'm sure you all remember the humanoid trees in *LOTR*, who it took ages to come to a conclusion. At least for the black metal part of the scene, this feels accurate. For example, if anyone is familiar with the band Shadows of Paragon, you also know that they have yet to release a full-length album. Previously they have released two EP's, the last one in 2004. Well now, coming up next year, their new full-length album is coming out! So, finally, after five years, something new is produced. That's a long time to wait if you're a fan. The name of the album is a secret, but lots of info and sounds are found at: shadowsofparagon.com. The other big "Ent" in Swedish Christian BM is my band, Admonish. We have thus far also only released two recordings: one demo and one EP (2006) and we are now in the exciting but slow process of completing material for our coming full-length. This we plan to finish and release in 2009. Although the wheels of time turn slowly, we have had a lot of progression and have almost all songs finished. I guess our new material is comparable to our old stuff, but maybe more intricate. I encourage you to visit: myspace.com/admonishblackmetal.

THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

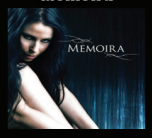
By Steve Rowe

METAL CULTURE

I just finished watching Sam Dunn's new documentary *Global Metal*. I thought I had seen it all, with all the countries I have played metal in over the years. However, metal is far wider-reaching than I had ever imagined. I knew there was a big metal scene in Japan, Indonesia and even Israel. However, I never knew there was a metal scene in The Middle East or India. Metal is surely a global art form, culture and language. It seems Dunn has covered everything metal in his two famous documentaries, but he has missed one very obvious one: our Christian Metal culture. However, on reflection of this, can we limit true Christianity to the word "culture?" I don't think so, myself. Christianity to me is way more than just a culture. It is the way to eternal life. Culture has unfortunately become a big part of Christianity. We hear many pastors talking about the culture of their church. We see many extreme church cultures from extreme liberalism to freaked-out hype. So, what has happened to the sober-minded, Bible teaching church of godly order I grew up to know as truth? I think people forget how much suffering the early church faced in standing up in this world for Jesus. The promotion of "die to yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus and go into all the world and preach the Gospel" has been replaced with financial prosperity, false gifts and teaching and even churches that are pro gay. I think Sam Dunn has ignored our Christian Metal scene because he may think it does not fit metal or is confused about Christian church division, in-fighting and confusion. How can we as Christian metalheads help this situation? Whatever slant you take being a Christian into metal – just Christians making art, Christian metal or evangelical Jesus Metal – we must be united as a reflection of the faith that is beyond being just a culture. I have accepted that Christians can choose just to make art, but it seems that those wanting to play Jesus Metal do not attain the same acceptance. To see people won to Christ, we must not be like an army divided against itself as the "church" is reflecting. Let us be united in the sense that as Christian metalheads we have a common bond of unity, good news goals, and lives that reflect our calm, holy, righteous and orderly faith in Christ. That said; let us be aggressive in our artistic endeavors and against Satan's work in the metal scene. If you have a need to deny Christ in your life, then maybe it is best to never even suggest that you have any form of Christian faith. None of us are perfect and all of us are sinners, but if you cannot "walk the walk" then maybe consider never to "talk the talk."

NIGHTMARE RECORDS NEW RELEASES

MEMOIRA
"Memoira"



Epic metal from Finland, Haunting female vocals, crunchy guitars, reminding of Epica, Within Temptation, Evanescence!

CLOUDSCAPE
"Global Drama"

3rd release for this melodic progressive power metal band from Sweden, their strongest to date!

ORDER OF NINE
"A Means To Know End"

US METAL -Speedy, Thrashy, in your face! Featured On The METAL EDGE CD in this issue!

AVIAN :: Ashes And Madness

An amazing sophomore album! Dark crunchy epic power metal with soaring vocals and shreding guitar work featuring vocalist Lance King (Ex-Balance of Power & Pyramaze) and guitarist Bill Hudson (Powerquest & Circle II Circle) and guitarist /composer Yan Leviathan.

www.AvianBand.com
www.myspace.com/avianband

ANDROMEDA :: The Immunity Zone

6th Release for this Brilliant progressive metal band from Sweden that just played this years PROG POWER FEST in Atlanta, GA. This band brings amazingly well done Progressive Rock/Metal to the ears of fans of bands such as SYMPHONY X, DREAM THEATER and A.C.T.

www.andromedaonline.com
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ALBUM REVIEWS [CONT'D]

NJIQAHDDA

NJI. NJIIN. NJIIIJN.

One of the first things you'll notice about this release is the mysterious, anonymous shroud that encompasses the entity of Njiqahdda (pronounced Nee-Jee-Kah-Da). Members are credited as: "/" - guitar, clean vocals, keyboard/synth, field recordings, texts; "_" - drums, bass, distorted vocals. Anonymity and mystery are definitely part of the aesthetic on this release, and it works well for them. Musically, you'll find mid-paced black metal with lots of layers and distorted effects. Njiqahdda are equally influenced by Horde as they are by Pink Floyd. A unique release and an interesting addition to the unblack metal scene. [Pagan Flames] Loyd Harp

AVIAN

ASHES AND MADNESS

The sophomore effort from this Minnesota-based melodic power metal group is again joined by Mr. "golden-throat" Lance King (Pyramaze, Balance of Power) for yet another blistering release, minus David Ellefson (Megadeth) this time out. With guitarist Yan Leviathan still at the helm of the music and lyrics, we get another mix of what you'd expect from Euro-metal like Kamelot, Hammerfall, etc., serving up a platter of melodic bliss with excellent musicianship and production. No new ground is really broken from the first release, but consistency is not bad when it is this good. [Nightmare] Jeff McCormack

NEAL MORSE

SOLO SCRIPTURA AND BEYOND (DVD)

This 2-DVD set includes the most exhaustive collection of live music from Neal and his very talented Dutch European touring band ever released. Disc one features the *Sola Scriptura* tour from last year – almost 3 hours of live performance, covering most of the *Sola Scriptura* songs, and two medleys from *?* and *Testimony*. Disc two contains 9 songs from the 2006 *Question Mark tour* and the gem of this set – a one-hour and forty-minute "behind the scenes" extremely candid look at the *Sola Scriptura tour*, Neal and his tour mates. The documentary itself contains tons of rehearsal clips. Fans of Neal, Spock's Beard and progressive rock will find this DVD not only essential, but endearing as well. [Radiant] Jonathan Swank

FOR TODAY

EKKLESIA

This is a solid, metal-infused hardcore album. Nothing really new or awe inspiring going on here, but at the same time it's pretty good and pretty well executed. The lead guitar players can play well, but should cut loose more. Actually, that's what keeps me from loving it: while this album is enjoyable and probably the band is great live, *Ekklesia* really just feels "held back." [Facedown] Michael Larson

STONEFUZE

S/T

I was surprised to find a Swedish band, on Rivel Records no less, that did not have the expected melodic power metal style that seems so common from that neck of the woods. What we have here is a gritty-grungy-dirty guitar driven hard rock, from a band that has been rocking in one form or another since about 1989. The powerful raw vocals remind me at times of some of the greats of yesteryear, like Di'anno era Maiden, Motorhead and Raven. Musically, there is nothing really new or cutting edge, but what they do they do well, with a hard rock edge mixed with an ever-so-slight punkish energy and feel. I found this to be refreshing and quite enjoyable. [Rivel/CMSweden] Jeff McCormack

DELIVERANCE

S/T, WEAPONS… (REISSUES)

Ok, tightwads – you want to know if the reissues of the first two Deliverance discs are worth spending your cash. You know the music already – these are the big D speed metal/ thrash classics before Jimmy Brown went all moody David Bowie on us in the early 90's. The Intense originals and even the subpar KMG 2-for-1 reissues are difficult to find now. Artwork has been redone (thankfully with the same themes), a foreword was penned by Scott Waters (Ultimatum), and each disc has bonus tracks – two songs from *California Metal* on the debut, and an unreleased song from *A Decade of Deliverance* on *Weapons*. Having memorized the originals riff by riff, I can't honestly say I notice a difference with the remastering, but these reissues will give metalheads a chance to fill holes in their metal collection. [Retroactive] Chris Gatto

WRENCH IN THE WORKS

THE LOST ART OF HEAPING COALS

You have to admit that the level of competency in the metalcore scene seems to be growing consistently. I remember a day when a release like this would have been heralded as amazing. Not so now … now it would rate there in the middle of the road somewhere. This is pretty standard, with some slight deviations that I found intriguing. I also need to mention that I found the drumming absolutely riveting. [Facedown] Michael Larson

HOPE FOR THE DYING

S/T

And the greatest thing about trends coming full circle is? The guitar solo is returning, and, oh, how I thank the Lord for that! This band is young, full of variance and, as far as I can tell, loves to play the guitar. Great heavy sound, imagine Killswitch unearths Maiden. Definitely a band to watch! Get your limited edition digi-pak today. Once they're gone, it's ITunes only for these cats. [Strike First] Michael Larson

MIRROR OF DEAD FACES

LAMENTATION

This album makes me want to drive fast and fight! Triplets abound and aggression rules this. You know this band seems to be marketed as core, but this lacks breakdowns and is much more metal instead. Now they are like the Black Dahlia Murders and At the Gates, but they do it so well. Alright, where're my keys, I gotta go hit something. [Creator Destructor] Michael Larson

SHINING STAR

RESET

SS have released its third record of well-produced melodic metal (with touches of prog and power metal). There are no obvious points of comparison. Ricardo Paronic's vocals stand out, as both gritty and melodic. The riffing and fretwork on "Desperate and Suffocated" are nice and heavy (guitarist Fabio Rocha also produced the record), leaving you wanting more. Luckily, "Radiation Flame" delivers also. The band's lyrics don't come off as preachy, but they do express spirituality.The greatest thing about this disc is its originality without being a novelty act, and leaving one without being able to pigeonhole the band to any one corner of the metal market. [Silent Music] Loyd Harp

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